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A HALF CENTURY OF ASSYRIOLOGY.

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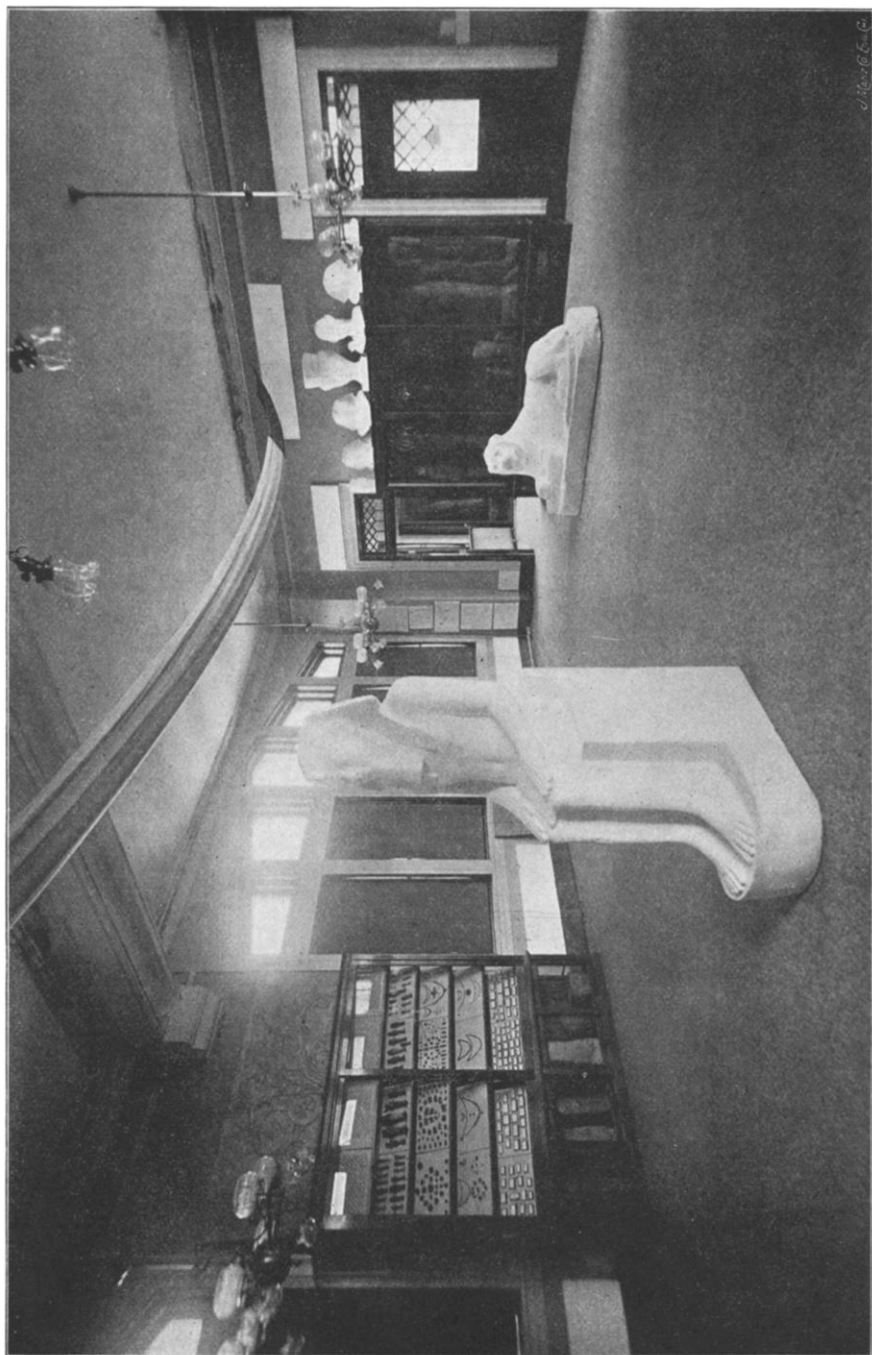
I. Introduction — Object of oriental museums — Interest in Assyriology — Grotefend and Rawlinson — Writing materials — Classes of Assyriologists. II. Sketch of the history of Assyriology by decades, 1845-1895 — The earliest workers — Test of 1857 — George Smith's work — The school of Delitzsch — De Sarzec — Workers of the last decade — El Amarna — Niffer. — III. Results — Collections — Interest in universities — Publication — New light on Assyrian history, art, literature, religion, and social life — Relation of this culture to other cultures. — IV. Problems and tasks for the future — Conclusion.

TO ONE who is interested in the Orient it is a privilege and a joy to share in the festivities of this auspicious day, whereon the West dedicates a home for the learning of the East.

The object of an oriental museum is to foster the study and to disseminate the knowledge of the Orient. In attaining this object there are several distinct steps. One of these is the acquisition by digging in the ruins, by purchase, or by gift, of oriental material, either original or in reproduction. A second step is the accumulation of books treating of the subject. A third, the attraction of scholars and of students, who shall master the known and push back the borders of the unknown, and who by their publications and their teaching shall place their knowledge at the service of the whole community. An oriental museum is thus a home for the preservation of precious eastern objects, and also a center of active intellectual inquiry.

Surely no justification is needed for such a study as this. From the East comes light. The Orient is the ancestral home of the race. In the East arose the ruling religions of the world. From the East comes much that is noblest in our literature and most potent in our culture. To understand ourselves we must recognize our obligations to the Orient.

In its broader sense the word "oriental" is almost synonymous



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with "Asiatic." In a narrower sense it is often used to designate those portions of the East with which our culture specially connects, western and southern Asia, the home of Indo-European and of Semitic peoples.

Among the Semitic peoples the names most familiar are the Hebrews, the Arabs and the Phœnicians. But older perhaps than any of these, or at least antedating these in the attainment of high culture, was that branch of the Semitic stock, dwelling in the valleys of the Tigris and the Euphrates, and known as the Babylonians and the Assyrians. The study of this branch of the great Semitic stock constitutes the science of Assyriology, the most recent, the most fascinating and the most far-reaching department of Semitic inquiry.

It is the most recent. Its real beginnings are barely more than fifty years old. A half century ago Mr. Layard was just undertaking those Assyrian excavations which were to enrich the British Museum beyond computation. Mr. Botta had already, it is true, unearthed the palace of Sargon, near Nineveh, but no one yet understood the vast importance of what he had achieved.

The brilliant work which had preceded Botta and Layard was accomplished not by the excavator but by the traveler, who visited and described the Persian and the Babylonian ruins and who brought to Europe specimens of the cuneiform writing, and by the decipherer, who wrested from these records the secrets of more than twenty centuries. The two immortal names in the history of Assyriology, Grotefend and Rawlinson, may not be omitted even in the briefest survey. These pioneers showed the way to the mystery of the old Persian writings, and this mystery once solved opened the door to a greater, the storehouse of Assyrian and Babylonian lore. By a fortunate circumstance the kings of Persia not only adapted the cuneiform script to the needs of their own language, but they also provided their records with parallel Assyrian-Babylonian translations. The passage from the reading of the Persian to that of the Assyrian thus became possible, and the spades of Botta and Layard yielded most opportunely fresh material for the development of the study.

How fascinating this subject is, how full of surprises, time would fail to tell. The explorers have been thrilled as they have walked through halls and courts untrodden for thousands of years, and the quiet student has been lifted into ecstasy as he has traced the thoughts of his brother penned while the culture of the world was young.

I have called Assyriology the most far-reaching branch of Semitic study. This claim is justified by the antiquity of the Assyrian culture, by its duration, and by its wide connections. How significant these are will appear, it is hoped, in the course of this address.

We may well be grateful to the Assyrians and Babylonians that their chief writing material was clay and that their chief building material was unbaked bricks. By the disintegration of these bricks, beginning as it did, at once, on the decline of political power, the records and bas-reliefs have been enveloped in a covering of earth until our own day. True, countless numbers of the clay books were also unbaked, and most of these have perished, but the greater literary treasures were ordinarily fired, and we may hope, as the result of past and future diggings, that most of these treasures are yet to be our possession.

Yet one more remark, touching the Assyriologists themselves. In a broad view these are of many classes. We have first the patrons of Assyriology, be they governments, institutions, societies or individuals, who by their influence or their money make excavation and the acquisition of collections possible. Then come the explorers, men entitled to the greatest gratitude and admiration, because of the cheerfulness with which, in the interest of science, they endure privation and dangers to health and to life. But we will offer them today felicitation, not commiseration. It is no mean honor to recover for our museums the priceless memorials of the past. It is no ordinary thrill of joy to lift out of the débris of ages a clod enveloping a record more than six thousand years of age, or a weird poem on creation, or a version of the biblical story of the deluge. After the explorer comes the editor, whose duty it is to reproduce, with diplomatic accuracy, on the printed page, the intricacies and peculiarities of the

record before him. To attain success here is of the greatest consequence and the greatest difficulty. Even the slightest error will mislead the little band of scholars who make use of the publication. The editor must therefore be a specialist in the language. But the specialists are more numerous than the editors. They are the little army of linguists, who translate and explain the writings, who prepare the grammars, lexicons and histories, and who thus make accessible to the larger learned public the results of their investigations. Lastly comes the intelligent non-specialist, who eagerly follows the progress of Assyriology, and who publishes afar the results in books and magazines, on the platform and in the pulpit. No teacher of ancient history or of the Old Testament can properly discharge the duties of his office unless he at least belongs to this class of intelligent observers of the work of Assyriologists.

It is not the purpose of this address to give a detailed history of Assyrian discovery. Such a task would be too technical and would require too much time. One cannot even undertake in a brief address to apportion the honors due to the illustrious workers in this field. Our duty today is rather to indicate some of the more noteworthy steps in the advance, and to specify some of the most valuable results of the study.

In giving a sketch of what has been done we may conveniently follow the chronological method, and a division of the half century into decades will be adequate for our purpose.

Between 1845 and 1855 the most important results gather around the names of the Frenchman Botta, the Englishmen Rawlinson and Layard, and the Irishman Hincks. In 1845 Botta had just completed his share in the first great modern work of excavating an Assyrian palace. Soon after began the publication of his five beautiful folios embodying the fruits of his work, with reproduction of the inscriptions and with sketches of the architecture and the bas-reliefs. In 1845 Mr. Layard began in the ruins of Calah and in 1846 in the ruins of Nineveh that series of excavations which has made his the best known name among the explorers. He discovered the palaces of several

Assyrian kings, great quantities of the finest bas-reliefs in alabaster, and large numbers of clay books. His popular narratives carried to a large reading public the knowledge of his success.

While this work was going on a few scholars were busy in applying to the writings from Assyria the key which had been found in the Old Persian remains. Among these Edward Hincks and Henry Rawlinson are conspicuous. Hincks was a genius in the deciphering of riddles and by his keen insight and fine grammatical feeling made many of the most valuable contributions to the development of the young science. Rawlinson first became interested in cuneiform writing some ten years before Layard's work began. As a young British officer in Persia he had copied and deciphered the records of Darius and Xerxes carved on the mountain sides. From these Old Persian records his interest passed over to those from Assyria. His fostering care of the young science acquired for him the well-merited title, "Father of Assyriology," and the continuous services of more than half a century made this title secure.

However brief be the account of this decade, there must be mentioned at least the names of two Frenchmen, De Longpérier and De Saulcy, who made important studies and observations.

Early in the next decade, 1855-65, the progress of decipherment was so far advanced that the various students of the subject translated the records substantially in the same way. A practical test was made in 1857, when the same inscription was translated by four scholars working independently of each other. The amount of agreement was so large as to dispel forever all reasonable doubt that the Assyrian inscriptions may be translated. Among the more noteworthy of the workers in this decade, besides those already mentioned, are J. Oppert and J. Ménant in France. The former had begun his studies in the preceding decade. He now published the results of an expedition to Mesopotamia which he had made from 1851 to 1854, and his prolific pen has not since then been idle. Ménant has likewise been active. Among his many publications those on the Assyrian seal engravings are worthy of special mention.

Of travel and excavations in this decade the most fruitful is the work of Victor Place. In 1855 Place completed the exploration of Sargon's palace, which he had begun four years before. This palace had been the scene of Botta's successes in 1843 and 1844.

The most important publication of the decade was a volume by Henry Rawlinson and Edwin Norris, called *A selection from the historical inscriptions of Chaldæa, Assyria and Babylonia*. Four other volumes have subsequently appeared, edited by Rawlinson and other scholars. These folios, sold at a price which is merely nominal, place in the hands of students many of the most important cuneiform inscriptions of the British Museum, relating to a variety of subjects. Material was thus furnished which might be worked up by those who lived remote from the Museum.

The linguistic publications of Rawlinson, Hincks and Oppert during this decade may be said to have practically completed the period of decipherment. Much progress was still to come in matters of detail; but in broad outline the Assyrian language was now already recovered from the ruins.

The historical bearings of the discoveries were also now well understood. The Assyrian kings whose records had come to light, were those whose names were already familiar from biblical and classical sources, and some of them had played a great rôle in relation to more westerly nations.

The next decade, 1865-75, is made memorable by George Smith's discovery of the greatest literary product which cuneiform research has yet revealed. This was a poem of some thirty-five hundred lines, most of which, thanks to the insight and the enthusiasm of George Smith, is now recovered. Mr. Smith was an engraver by profession, who by native endowment and without special preliminary training, attained a most enviable position among Assyriologists. The first fragments which he discovered of the ancient poem, now commonly called the Izdubar Epic, had been brought from Nineveh to the British Museum many years before. The most interesting portion of

this poem is the tablet on which is recorded a version of the deluge story, practically the same as that given in the Book of Genesis. It is related that when the young scholar first recognized the nature of his discovery he was almost set wild with excitement. One can easily believe the report. Mr. Smith published this poem and much other related material in a well known book, *The Chaldaean Account of Genesis*. His other labors were large and successful, including two fruitful trips to Assyria. On the third trip he died at Aleppo in 1876, a victim to his zeal in Assyrian research. In this decade was founded in London a new society, called the Society of Biblical Archæology. From its origin the periodicals of this society have paid special attention to Assyriology and many important discoveries have been published therein. The journals of the oriental societies of England, France, Germany and America have likewise published many Assyrian studies. In more recent years other journals have arisen, specially designed to be mouthpieces of Assyriology.

During this decade entered the Assyrian field François Lenormant, in France, and A. H. Sayce, in England, two encyclopædic minds to whom we are indebted for many brilliant suggestions and discoveries. I bring gladly this just tribute to the work of Professor Sayce, although I have had, along with other Assyrian and biblical scholars, repeated occasion to regret the haste of many of his recent utterances. The acute Josef Halévy in France must likewise here be mentioned. He has been the most valiant champion in behalf of the Semitic character of the entire Babylonian-Assyrian culture. While most other students of the subject see evidences of a non-Semitic culture antedating and shaping that of the Babylonian, Halévy, supported in later years by several eminent converts, has with much acumen continuously denied the correctness of this view.

The close of this decade is marked by the entry of Germany into the field. This means, of course, the application to the subject of those methods of study which have given the Germans preëminence in all lines requiring fullness of learning and patience of research. The foundations were laid by Eberhard

Schrader. In his work on the inscriptions he set forth the principles of the language. As a theologian it was natural for him to lay stress on the biblical side of the science, and we are indebted to him for an excellent work on the inscriptions and the Old Testament. His most comprehensive recent work is a translation into German, in conjunction with several younger scholars, of a selection of important Assyrian inscriptions (*Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*). But one might say without disparagement that Schrader has no greater merit than to have been the teacher of Friedrich Delitzsch.

The philological work of the decade, indeed of the two decades, beginning in 1875, has been largely done by Delitzsch and his school. For twenty years he made Leipzig the Mecca of Assyrian students, who were attracted by his enthusiasm for the subject, and whose advancement was guided by his kindly interest. In his Assyrian reader he gave the first convenient handbook for the beginner. From his pen has come the first critical grammar of the language, and his *Handwörterbuch*, just completed, has placed all Semitic students under great obligations. His other books, essays, and articles have done much to advance the subject.

But the chief work of Delitzsch is that he has inspired so many other young men to the study of Assyrian, and has introduced them to severe critical, philological methods. Delitzsch founded a school, and the great expansion of the subject in Germany and America is directly due to him. Nearly all the teachers of Assyrian in these two countries, and there are many, have been trained either by him or by his pupils. To speak of the work of these men in detail is impossible. Conspicuous among them are Hommel, Haupt, and Bezold.

Fritz Hommel has wrought by preference in the more remote and obscure periods of the subject, and is at present engaged in an elaborate effort to prove that Babylonia is the source of Egyptian culture. Paul Haupt is the author of many erudite and suggestive papers and treatises and has done good work as editor, notably in the publication of the tablets of the Izdubar

Epic, or as he calls it, the Nimrod Epic. In connection with Professor Delitzsch he has established two important and successful serial publications, the *Assyriologische Bibliothek*, in which have appeared many of the best monographs of the Delitzsch school, and the *Beiträge zur Assyriologie*, the latter in the present decade. Carl Bezold was one of the founders in 1884 of a journal devoted specially to cuneiform study (*Zeitschrift für Keilschriftforschung*. Name changed after the appearance of two volumes to *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*). A monumental work of the greatest value is his catalogue of the cuneiform tablets in the Kouyunjik collection of the British Museum.

In England Theophilus Pinches has done valiant work as assistant keeper of the Assyrian antiquities in the British Museum. He has been a careful editor of texts, especially in Rawlinson's great series, has graciously placed his time and knowledge at the service of other scholars, and has made many of the most valuable recent discoveries.

In this decade J. N. Strassmaier began the publication of a serviceable list of Assyrian words, but this work was eclipsed by a greater service in the next decade, the publication of more than 2500 Babylonian tablets relating to the private and social life of the people. This important class of records had hitherto received but little attention.

The most noted discovery of this decade was made by the Frenchman E. de Sarzec in a Babylonian ruin called Telloh. The explorer found many writings and works of art, very archaic in appearance, some of which it is now believed are hardly later than 4000 B. C. Among the remains are headless statues in the round of the Telloh rulers, carved with great care and skill out of the hardest stone. This find was the more surprising because the later Babylonian-Assyrian sculptures which have reached us are nearly all in bas-relief. Very recent new diggings at Telloh have brought to light a well-preserved ancient library, with its thousands of clay books arranged in an orderly manner. Unfortunately the contents have been dissipated and are now offered for sale in many places by the dealers in antiquities. In 1879 began the publication of a French journal, the title of which is

limited to Egyptian and Assyrian philology and archæology (*Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes*).

The Catherine Wolfe expedition to Babylonia in 1884-5 was the first from America, and may be considered as the initial step toward the more important American expedition of the next decade from Philadelphia. Its leader, Wm. Hayes Ward, brought home many tablets and seals, now in the Metropolitan Museum of New York. Dr. Ward has served the science well in making a special study of carved seals.

The first elaborate attempt to deal with Assyrian art was likewise made in this decade, in the beautiful and comprehensive volume of Perrot and Chipiez (Vol. II of their *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité, 1884*). About the same time (1884) begins under the editorship of Léon Heuzey the splendid publication (*Découvertes en Chaldée*) of De Sarzec's discoveries at Telloh.

The year 1884 saw the foundation of *Hebraica*, another journal in which many valuable articles on Assyriology have appeared. Its successful management during these twelve years has been one of the diversions of the busy president of The University of Chicago.

We come now to the last decade, just closed. The good work goes on at accelerated speed, and if this review made any claim to completeness, the bare names of those entitled to mention would fill a printed page. Begging the pardon of all others, I cannot refrain from at least calling such names as Brünnow, Jensen, Lehmann, Zimmern, Winckler, Tallquist, Peiser, and Meissner in Germany; Amiaud and Scheil in France; Budge, Evetts, and Strong in England; Tiele in Holland; McCurdy, Hilprecht, Peters, Jastrow, Craig, R. F. Harper, E. J. Harper, Muss-Arnolt, and Reisner in America. Two or three must come in for a special word at a later point. Early in the decade was founded in England (1886) the *Babylonian and Oriental Record*, a monthly devoted specially to this science.¹

¹ Shortly before (1885) the *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie orientale* came into existence in France.

This decade will always be noted for two remarkable Assyrian discoveries. The first is associated with the name El Amarna. In this ruin of an Egyptian capital were found in 1887 some 300 clay tablets in the Babylonian script and language. They come from the fifteenth century B. C. and are of the nature of diplomatic correspondence addressed to Egyptian kings and officials by the kings of various countries in western Asia, including Babylon and Assyria, and by the governors of the Assyrian and Palestinian region, then subject to Egypt. Most of these remarkable tablets were acquired by the museums of Berlin and London, and through the labors of Winckler, Abel, and Bezold have been placed in the hands of scholars. The important new light which the tablets give on the affairs of Palestine before its occupation by the Hebrews has made this discovery the subject of more discussion perhaps than any other has been. That the Babylonian script and language, and therewith naturally the Babylonian culture, was supreme in Palestine nearly thirty-five centuries ago is surely a most significant fact.

The credit of the second great discovery of the decade belongs to Philadelphia, whose generous citizens have provided the money for a new expedition to Babylonia. The two campaigns of 1888-90 were in charge of Professor J. P. Peters, and the third, from 1893-6, in charge of Mr. J. H. Haynes. The scene of operations has been the ruins called Niffer, to the southeast of Babylon. This ruin marks the site of one of the most ancient religious centers, that of the god Bēl, and the explorers have been engaged in unearthing the vast temple of this deity. We are informed that they have taken out some 31,000 tablets and fragments, a sufficiently noteworthy result, even if these tablets were of a late period. But many of them are not so. Some come from rulers hitherto unknown, and apparently from a far higher antiquity than the era of Sargon, who belongs fifty-seven centuries ago. Professor H. V. Hilprecht, to whom we are already indebted for two installments of the inscriptions from Niffer, is disposed to place some of the remains in the fifth pre-Christian millennium. The success of this expedition, far exceeding all anticipation, illustrates what rich sur-

prises are still awaiting the spade of the explorer. This great achievement is largely due to the devotion and self-sacrifice of Dr. Haynes and Professor Hilprecht.

In this review I have not yet called the name of Hormuzd Rassam. A native of the East, and associated with Layard in his earliest diggings, Mr. Rassam has made various trips for the British Museum, especially after Mr. Smith's death, twenty years ago, and has brought to the Museum many of its greatest treasures, such as the Sargon macehead, the Abuhabba tablet, and the bronze strips from the palace gates of Balawat.

Before turning to another branch of our subject, let me mention two other important recent American contributions. Dr. G. A. Reisner, of Harvard University, has just issued for the Berlin Museum an admirable volume containing a collection of Sumerian-Babylonian hymns belonging to the Greek period. Professor R. F. Harper of The University of Chicago is engaged in publishing the Assyrian letters of the Kouyunjik collection in the British Museum. Two volumes have appeared and the series when complete will constitute one of the most significant contributions to the hopeful young science.

As we glance backward over this brief survey, it appears that the work of exploration has been divided among the French, the English and the Americans. The English have acquired the largest collections of tablets and bas-reliefs. The French have done, as one might anticipate, the best work on the art, both architecture and sculpture. Though late to enter the field, the Germans have given to the subject its great philological impulse of the past quarter of a century. No one who appreciates the difficulties, in the field and in the study, can withhold his admiration from the men who have toiled so devotedly to recover and revivify the memorials of a long buried past.

Turning from this review of the work of the half century, let us now summarize the results of this great activity.

The most tangible result is, of course, the collections of literary, artistic and industrial objects from the Assyrian-Baby-

lonian ruins. These are familiar to the visitors of the museums in London, Paris, Berlin, Constantinople, Philadelphia, and New York, not to mention the scores of smaller collections made by other institutions and individuals.

The language is now taught in many of the leading universities, particularly in Germany and America, and in some of the theological seminaries. Among these universities may be mentioned Berlin, Leipzig, Breslau, Munich, Heidelberg, Paris, Oxford, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Pennsylvania, Columbia, Michigan and Chicago.

Of periodicals there are four founded with special reference to Assyriology, while about a dozen others, devoted to oriental or biblical science in general, frequently publish Assyriological papers.

The Assyrian section is attaining importance in most of the great oriental and biblical societies in Europe and America.

A good beginning has been made in the work of publishing the texts, notably those in London and Berlin, and one might easily name a score of editors who have been engaged in this task.

These tangible, external results speak for themselves, but they have been possible only on account of the intrinsic value of the Assyrian material. Let us now turn our attention to this subject.

We note, first, that in the Assyrian-Babylonian material we have the contemporary records of the chief actors in the great political drama of western Asia from the earliest times till our own era began. Fifty years ago the times of Abraham seemed remote. Today Abraham must be reckoned among the moderns. Fifty years ago we knew of Assyrian history little beyond the names of a few rulers. Today we know many scores of these rulers, their wars, their buildings and their hunting expeditions, and we read the very words in which they recorded their glorious deeds for posterity. Fifty years ago the Assyrians seemed to be only a warlike tribe who made predatory assaults on inoffensive nations of the West. Today we see the whole

current of western history directed by the statecraft of Nineveh and Babylon.

We note, secondly, that these discoveries have given us real history for legend. That Greek and Roman writers could not know that history was not their fault. They had no adequate means of knowing. Nor can we blame the biblical writers that they have mentioned so briefly Assyrian affairs. It did not lie within their scope to do more. But we may be grateful even to erring classic tradition and to brief biblical reference, because these have furnished useful hints in finding our way to the secure paths of living Assyrian history.

Thirdly, in the bas-reliefs we have the pictorial story of the times. Without the writing these pictures would be in part unintelligible, but with the writings they become a great aid in reconstructing the ancient life. More than any other Semitic people the Assyrians were lovers and patrons of art. From their chisels have come some of the world's finest specimens of bas-relief. The mass and quality of their carving, both on stone slabs and on seals, is such that their work forms an important chapter in the history of art. Impressive still in its fragmentary condition and in its new surroundings, how deeply impressive must it have been as a whole in its original setting, where part fitted to part and where its spectators understood each symbolic detail.

Fourthly. Assyrian literature, at least in fragments, has now become familiar. We read the fables and mythological poems, the great deeds of men and of gods, with which the ancient bards charmed their listeners. We see the battle between the god of light and the demon of chaos, and join in the chorus which the old Babylonians raised in honor of the victor. With Izdubar we slay monster savage beasts, free the land of tyrants, scorn the proffered hand of the goddess of love, wander over untrodden regions, and hear on the blessed isles the story of the deluge.

Fifthly, the ancient religion lives again before our eyes. We see the gorgeous temples, the awe-inspiring statues of the gods dwelling in their shrines or borne about in sacred procession, the

mitred priest, the solemn sacrifices. We have our part in the observance of the religious festival, go with the worshiper to confession, and join with him in singing the praise or invoking the aid of the mighty gods. Religion is one of the vast concerns of life, and Babylonian society was as deeply saturated with religion as was the Hebrew. With striking differences between the two systems, there are also noteworthy resemblances, a fact whose importance is soon to come into clearer light through the special labors of several Assyrian scholars.

Sixthly. The social organization astonishes us by its complexity and its high qualities. Thanks to the countless records of social contracts, we have a closer view of it than of that of almost any other ancient people. The accounts of barter, sale, money lending, hiring, renting, marriage, dowry, wills, adoption of children, lawsuits, reveal a state of affairs not essentially unlike that in which we now live. And so it had been for thousands of years before Jeremiah wrote to the Jews in exile to be quiet citizens and pray for the peace of Babylon.

This catalogue would make Assyria worthy of attention if Assyrian life and history stood apart from the rest of the world. If this culture had developed by itself and had perished without giving a suggestion or an idea to other nations, it would still be full of instruction to the student of history, of art, of religion, of economics. But such isolation did not exist. War and commerce brought the Babylonians and Assyrians into frequent and close contact with other nations. They were thus both teachers and learners in the great school of humanity. They seem to have reached the Mediterranean in their campaigns as early as 4000 B.C. We have seen that their language and script were the medium of diplomatic correspondence in the fifteenth century B.C., and that they were current in Palestine at this early age. Hommel's thesis is possible, that Egyptian culture came from Babylon. We know that Persia inherited the Babylonian art, and it is probable that Babylonian ideas were the civilizing germs among many of the surrounding peoples.

The relations of this subject to the Hebrews and to the Hebrew Scriptures are of the most intimate character. This is the reason

why Assyriology appeals with such power to Bible students. To the best of our knowledge, the first chapters of Genesis had an Assyrian form long before they became a Hebrew narrative. When the Hebrew hosts invaded Palestine they doubtless heard many stories and poems remaining from the times of Assyrian occupation. Assyrian politics were the doom of the kingdom of Israel, and it was a Babylonian who crushed forever the political significance of Judah. It was in Babylon that the Jewish exiles lived for half a century. The prophets of Israel are full of references to Assyrian and Babylonian affairs, and are often unintelligible without regard to the revelations of Assyriology. The Babylonian psalms offer much to elucidate those in our psalter, which they often resemble in form, in tone, and in expression. Much has been written on the cuneiform inscriptions and the Old Testament, but the subject is by no means exhausted.

Thus far our attention has been directed to the past and the present. In closing, let us turn our eyes to the future.

The problems of Assyriology are not yet all solved. Much has been achieved, but more remains to be done. A noble beginning has been made, but it is only a beginning. In the elaborate structure reared by the Assyrian development we have gained superficial views of a few of the outer courts. The well-stored mass of chambers still piques our curiosity.

From the ruins only a few score thousand inscribed tablets have come. How many hundreds of thousands are still awaiting their happy discoverer only the future can reveal. From present prospects hundreds of years will pass before the work of the excavator is done. It will not be done until the books and bas-reliefs and other precious remnants of Assyrian culture have found a home in the museums of enlightened countries, and until the explorer and the draughtsman have given us the principles of Assyrian architecture.

The clay books already recovered remain for the most part still unpublished, many of them indeed unread. The discoverer

has as true a field in the British Museum as in Babylon. Even if no additions to the tablets were to be expected, the collections already made offer material enough to satisfy the ambition of the youngest and most enthusiastic scholar.

But the collection and study of the remains is only a means to an end. That end is the understanding of the Assyrian development, its relation to other cultures and its lessons to us of today. The special problems in Assyrian history, art, religion, literature, economics are still numerous. Indeed, each new discovery opens new fields of inquiry. The best known periods are not yet perfectly known, while between the earliest and the latest times are whole centuries over which still hangs the veil of obscurity. To penetrate this mystery is now our task. The explorer must dig to the lowest depths of the ruins, and the scholars must apportion among themselves the great field for special cultivation.

And when, in the coming years, our successors shall be able to take in the whole course of the development from the time before writing began, there will perhaps still hover before them the tantalizing inquiry as to the origin of this culture. So sure is this subject to be one of perpetual interest.

A civilization, the oldest of which we know, possibly excepting the Egyptian, must have had an important influence, directly or indirectly, on the culture of other peoples. Of this we are sure in the case of the Egyptians, Phœnicians, Hebrews and Persians. This is tantamount to saying that the Assyrians have left an impress on the whole of western civilization. The enticing vision that attracts the student of today and of the future is the hope of discovering the limits of that influence, and thus of seeing how far the roots of our own culture may have been watered by the Tigris and the Euphrates. In the attainment of this end the scholars who shall toil in this building will bear an honorable part.

I fear that the ardor of my words may have led some of you to conclude that I consider Assyriology the sum and substance of oriental study. Not so. It is but one branch of Semitic study, and this in turn but a department of the vast field of

oriental research. To my own mind the Hebrew development is more important still. Indeed, I must confess that my interest in the Hebrews is a large part of my interest in the Assyrians. And so it is, and so it will continue to be with thousands of others. If I have seemed to magnify my subject, I hope that I have not lost sight of true perspective. I must repeat what I stated at the beginning, that Assyriology is the most far-reaching branch of Semitic inquiry. Some students are inclined to call it the most far-reaching branch of all oriental inquiry. It is at least one of the great subjects which this museum is designed to foster, and as such is worthy of our thoughts today.

Of the other subjects it did not belong to me to speak. They are all great, beyond estimate great.

A final word. Before The University of Chicago existed, some of her older sisters on the Atlantic coast were dreaming of Semitic and oriental museums. Thanks to the generosity of wise patrons of learning, we have our valuable growing collections. But our buildings remain a dream. Chicago, to whom nothing seems impossible, shows, by the impressive ceremonies of today, how dreams are converted into deeds. I offer her my sincere congratulations. And to the lady who has made this day possible I can see, in imagination, the admiring host of Orientalists bowing in grateful salutation.